ELDERBERRY ARCHIVES

BY ZERBYTRON

A SERIES FOR ALL AGES ABOUT TWO GRANDPAS NAMED JOHN AND GEORGE, ALONG WITH THEIR PURPLE MONKEY FRIEND NAMED PEANUT AND THE GRUMPY HENRY.

ARCHIVE #4: ROLL-A-RAMA CAFÉ

The afternoon sun hung low over Willowbrook as Grandpa John steered his electric golf cart toward a bright, lively building with a neon sign out front:

ROLL-A-RAMA CAFÉ

Grandpa George sat beside him, already smiling for no clear reason. Peanut rode in the back, goggles shining, sign ready. Henry sat wedged into the side seat, arms crossed, already irritated.

“I still haven’t recovered from that incident,” Henry muttered. “That pale nightmare creature wrecked my dumpster, and now I’m out for a meal like nothing happened.”

They were joined that day by Mr. Ryan. He adjusted his glasses and jingled a keyring with a small blue dolphin charm.

“Ryan’s not lying, trying, or buying!” he declared confidently.

Henry glanced at him. “That does not explain anything.”

John nodded. “Glad you could join us.”

Mr. Ryan nodded back. “Ryan’s ready for dining.”

Henry crossed his arms. “Let’s just eat.”

They entered the café.

Inside, the place buzzed with energy. Tables were full, laughter echoed, and waiters zipped around the room carrying baskets of large, golden rolls.

One waiter stopped in the middle of the room and shouted, “WHO WANTS A ROLL?”

A few hands went up.

“ROLLADOO!!!” the waiter yelled, launching a roll across the room.

It flew perfectly into someone’s hands.

John blinked. “That’s… efficient.”

They took a table.

Another waiter approached. “WHO WANTS A ROLL?”

John raised his hand.

“ROLLADOO!!!”

The roll flew through the air. John caught it, nodded, and took a bite. “Fresh. Buttery. Excellent.”

A second waiter stepped forward. “WHO WANTS A ROLL?”

George cupped his ear. “WHAT?! Who wants to go on a stroll?”

“No,” John said.

The waiter repeated louder, “WHO WANTS A ROLL?!”

George frowned. “WHAT?! Who wants coal?”

He pointed at Henry.

Henry snapped, “I do not want coal!”

The waiter tried again. “WHO. WANTS. A. ROLL?!”

George grinned and raised his hand.

“ROLLADOO!!!”

The roll launched. George caught it dramatically, took a bite, and nodded with approval. “Wonderful texture! Balanced flavor!”

He paused thoughtfully. “But you know what it could use?”

Henry leaned forward. “Don’t say it.”

George continued, “It could use—”

“DON’T SAY IT!”

“—just a pinch of—”

“NO!”

“—jelly.”

Henry paused mid-response. “...Alright. That’s acceptable.”

Another waiter approached. “WHO WANTS A ROLL?”

Mr. Ryan raised his hand. “Ryan’s applying for bread supply!”

“ROLLADOO!!!”

Mr. Ryan caught it cleanly and adjusted his glasses. “Accurate trajectory.”

Henry stretched in his seat.

A waiter spotted him. “WHO WANTS A ROLL?”

Before Henry could react—

“ROLLADOO!!!”

The roll hit him right in the face.

George burst into laughter.

Henry snapped, “Hey! Watch it!”

He picked up the roll, glared at it… then took a bite.

He paused, chewed, then swallowed.

“…That’s good,” he admitted.

For the first time all day, Henry stopped grumbling.

Peanut raised his hand and held up a sign:

“ROLL PLEASE.”

“ROLLADOO!!!”

Peanut caught it and gave a small approving nod.

Their meals arrived shortly after — plates full, steaming, and well-prepared: sandwiches, soup, and sides.

For a moment, everything was calm.

Then the door burst open.

A troop of purple monkeys rushed in, followed by yellow parrots and pink squirrels.

They scattered across the café.

“WHO WANTS A ROLL?”

Every animal raised a hand, wing, or paw.

“ROLLADOO!!!”

Rolls flew everywhere.

Monkeys caught them midair, squirrels stacked them, and parrots squawked excitedly.

One of the parrots landed on Henry’s shoulder.

“RAWK! ROCK AND ROLL! RAWK!” it squawked loudly in his ear.

Henry jerked away. “NOT IN MY EAR!”

Meanwhile, a group of purple monkeys dragged in stacks of banana boxes.

Within seconds, they constructed a massive fort in the center of the café — walls, tunnels, even a lookout tower.

George stood up while holding a roll. “This situation is really on a roll!”

John sat back. “Please sit down.”

George ignored him. “We must roll with it!”

Peanut held up a sign:

“THIS IS ROLLING OUT OF CONTROL.”

The café descended into full chaos. Rolls bounced off walls, squirrels stacked towers of bread, and some parrots tossed them back at waiters.

Customers ducked and waiters shouted.

Henry looked around, unimpressed. “This is exactly what I expected.”

One of the waiters finally stopped and examined the scene slowly.

“…Those are not customers.”

Henry scoffed. “You think?”

The banana box tower wobbled and collapsed with a loud crash, then the animals escaped. A few purple monkeys took some rolls to enjoy later.

Moments later, the group gathered their things and stepped outside into the fresh air.

Mr. Ryan reached into a bag and pulled out a large tin of cookies. “Ryan shares!”

He handed them out generously. John took one. Peanut accepted one. George grabbed two. Henry took one and inspected it.

Suddenly, a yellow parrot swooped down, snatched the cookie from Henry’s hand, and landed on a nearby post.

“FINDERS KEEPERS!” the parrot squawked. “GRUMPY SLEEPERS! RAWK!”

Henry froze, then shook his fist. “GIVE THAT BACK!”

The parrot took a bite. “TOO LATE!”

Henry grabbed a tomato and hurled it, which missed completely and hit the ground far behind the post.

The parrot blinked. “THAT WAS NOT EVEN CLOSE! RAWK!”

Henry growled. “Next one will be.”

The parrot flew off, laughing.

George clapped. “Great throw!”

Henry turned to him. “You’re next.”

Another parrot swooped in, grabbed the entire cookie tin from Mr. Ryan, and flew upward.

“RAWK! BULK ORDER!” it called.

Mr. Ryan shouted, “Ryan objects!”

The parrot replied, “RAWK! RYAN’S TOO SLOW, THOUGH!”

Mr. Ryan picked up a bread roll and threw it, but it missed by a mile.

The parrot dodged easily. “NICE TRY! NEEDS PRACTICE!”

It then flew away, just like the other.

Henry pointed upward. “This is exactly why I don’t enjoy outings!”

George looked up with a gleeful grin. “WHAT?! You enjoy shouting?”

“NO!”

A moment of silence as the parrots disappeared in the distance.

Mr. Ryan sighed. “Ryan’s disappointed.”

Henry crossed his arms and scowled. “I was enjoying that cookie.”

John replied, “Let’s just go home.”

Peanut held up one final sign:

“NEVER A NORMAL MEAL.”

No one disagreed.

They climbed back into the golf cart and drove off, leaving behind a trail of crumbs, mayhem, and one very satisfied group of animals.